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ABSTRACT

Job burnout is a condition observed in recent years among a wide variety of helping professions. In this study, burnout was described as emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and the desire to leave the job and/or profession. To examine burnout in the profession of school psychology, a random sample of members (N=139) of the Illinois School Psychologists Association completed survey materials including a Maslach Burnout Inventory, a School Psychologists Stress Inventory, and specially designed demographic and job satisfaction questionnaires. The primary questions addressed include: (1) What is the extent of burnout among school psychologists?; (2) What principal job-related stressors are associated with burnout?; (3) What relationship exists between certain demographic variables and burnout?; and (4) What best predicts burnout? Results suggested that symptoms of burnout occur frequently among school psychologists. Although job related stressors (e.g. lack of resources, time management) were related to burnout, demographic factors (e.g. satisfaction with supervision, case discrepancy index) were found to be the best predictors of burnout. Results also indicated that supervising psychologists are considered to be primary figures in resistance to burnout. Contains 27 references. (RB)

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Burnout and Job Dissatisfaction Among Practicing School Psychologists in Illinois.

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Abstract

Survey materials including a Maslach Burnout Inventory, a School Psychologists Stress Inventory, and specially designed demographic and job satisfaction questionnaires were completed by a random sample of members of the Illinois School Psychologists Association (N=139). Results suggested that symptoms of burnout frequently occur among this group of professionals. Although job related stressors (e.g. lack of resources, time management) were related to burnout, demographic factors (e.g. satisfaction with supervision, case discrepancy index) were found to be the best predictors of burnout. Results suggest that supervising psychologists are considered to be primary figures in resistance to burnout. Further research could aid in promoting more attention to preventing burnout in the field of schoo' psychology.

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Chapter I
Introduction

Burnout and Job Dissatisfaction

Job burnout is a condition observed in recent years among a wide variety of helping professions. Maslach and Jackson (1981) defined burnout according to three major components. The first component is described as emotional exhaustion. Frequently, professionals report feelings of being tired and overwhelmed with work demands. As emotional resources are expended, professionals feel they are no longer able to give of themselves at a psychological level.

The second component involves depersonalization. Burned-out professionals develop impersonal attitudes and become indifferent in responding to their clients. This perfunctory perception of others can lead professionals to view their clients as deserving of their afflictions.

The final component in burnout is a reduced sense of personal accomplishment that is frequently displayed in feelings of incompetence toward helping clients. In addition, professionals may feel displeased with themselves and dissatisfied with personal job-related accomplishments. In light of this definition, it must be noted that burnout and job dissatisfaction are not synonymous, but rather, overlap (Huberty and Huebner, 1988).

Job satisfaction has been associated with self-esteem, personal adjustment, general life adjustment, physical and mental health problems, and a variety of work-related variables including professional attitudes, absenteeism, and turnover (Levinson, Fetchkan, & Hohenshil, 1988). Burnout is a chronic and critical condition which develops slowly and gradually. Pines and Aronson (1983) refer to burnout simply as physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion. Freudenberger (1977) describes burnout as failing, wearing out, or becoming exhausted from excessive demands on energy, strength, and resources. Burnout is characterized as including symptoms such as cynicism and negativism as well as the tendency to be inflexible and adamant in thinking. Thus, burnout often leads to a closed mind about change or innovation.

Two key dimensions of burnout identified in the literature are: the time-related concept of wearing down, and the feeling of detachment (Reiner and Hartshorne, 1982). Frequently, the early warnings of burnout are overlooked and notice is taken only when the professional is no longer able to manage stress. Burnout is a multiple threat (Freudenberger, 1977). It undermines the professional and cheats the child. Burnout propagates negative feelings and resignation within both the professional and the child and curtails coping defenses.

Kahill (1988) groups the symptoms of burnout into five major categories. The first reported category is physical. Research done by

Belcastro and Hays (1984) indicates that burnout is associated with general physical health and illness, as well as some somatic complaints such as sleep disturbance. However, its relationship to major illness has not been consistently demonstrated.

The second category of symptoms is emotional. The most commonly reported emotional complaints include emotional depletion, irritability, anxiety, guilt, depression, and feelings of helplessness. Overall, the evidence suggests that burnout is most closely associated with depression (Kahill, 1988).

The third category described is behavioral. Research suggests that a number of unproductive behaviors are related to burnout. Such behaviors include turnover, poor job performance, absenteeism, and substance use (Kahill, 1988).

The fourth category of symptoms is interpersonal and usually affects clients, friends, and family members. Data suggest that burned-out subjects communicate with clients in impersonal and stereotyped ways. Victims of burnout may find it too demanding to concentrate on clients. Therefore, attempts to withdraw are frequently made. Data further suggest that burned-out subjects demonstrate negative emotions and often recede from their spouse and/or other family members (Kahill, 1988).

The final category of symptoms is attitudinal. Negative attitudes may develop toward clients, work, family, oneself, and life overall. Data indicate that victims of burnout often exhibit cynicism,

callousness, pessimism, defensiveness, client intolerance, dehumanization of clients through the use of jargon and intellectualization, a loss of work pleasure, and finally, absenteeism (Kahill, 1988).

In a broad sense, burnout can be perceived as the exhaustion of one's available energy, strength, and resources through an excessive struggle to reach some unrealistic expectation, whether that expectation is imposed by oneself or by existing societal values. In a specific sense, the definition of burnout must be related to the particular job situation, taking into consideration the nature of each of the stressors involved (Reiner & Hartshorne, 1982).

For school psychologists who provide services to an eclectic array of clients, burnout could be a significant problem. According to Levinson, Fetchkan, and Hohenshil (1988), school psychologists are relied upon to make important and critical decisions about children which may affect those children for the rest of their lives. Although school psychologists usually function as a member of an interdisciplinary decision making team, Gilliam and Coleman (1981) have shown that school psychologists, by virtue of their "expert power" and diagnostic expertise, are frequently regarded as the most influential members of this team.

Wise (1985) reported that school psychologists often experience a variety of on-the-job stressors. Such stressors are reported to include an over-abundance of work, insufficient pleasure

at work, inadequate structure and poor management, poor relationships with supervisory personnel, meager recognition of efforts, and the feeling of lacking control of one's situation. Additionally, school psychologists must attempt to balance seemingly irreconcilable job demands placed upon them by administrators, teachers, parents, and children. In a similar report, Reiner and Hartshorne (1982) contend that the lack of time and excessive caseloads, as well as the lack of support and appreciation are the predominant sources of distress among school psychologists.

Clair, Kerfoot, and Klausmeier (1972) further identified several areas of dissatisfaction among school psychologists. The primary area identified is an unavailability of adequate testing and interviewing facilities. In addition, lack of funding to attend conventions, lack of inservice training, lack of opportunity for advancement and promotion, and isolation from fellow practitioners are reported to be other major areas of dissatisfaction among school psychologists.

Freudenberger (1977) reported an important contributor to burnout is the absence of the opportunity to experience completion and follow-through. Often, because the child or the psychologist moves on, the school psychologist cannot determine if the work he/she has done with the child has really been effective. Furthermore, the lack of opportunities to experience ongoing follow-ups cause psychologists to view their work as ineffective.

Connolly and Reschly (1990) reported a relatively high turnover rate, as well as a current national shortage among school psychologists. Many school psychologists function in boundary role positions as they must work within specific area or regional guidelines. Such school psychologists maintain the function of working with and coordinating various intra- and extra-school subsystems without explicitly belonging to any subsystem. Accordingly, the probability of burnout among school psychologists is plausible.

Huberty and Huebner (1988) identified several major correlates of burnout among school psychologists. These correlates included clarity of role definitions, time pressures that resulted from excessive demands, external pressures beyond personal control, and internal pressures regarding how school psychologists perceived themselves. However, in spite of these correlates, clarity in job and role definitions appeared to be predominant in burnout victims. In a study by Peirson-Hubeny and Archambault (1987), role ambiguity and role conflict were identified and linked to perceived intensity of burnout. Huebner (1992) reported a significant relationship between burnout and obdurate supervisors, lack of contact with colleagues, and the feeling of being caught between a child's various needs and the administrative constraints. Additionally, Huberty and Huebner (1988) found age to be related to burnout. Their research suggested that as school psychologists become older, they may develop an

increased diversity of behavioral and attitudinal patterns that reduce the probability of the occurrence of burnout. As school psychologists become older and more experienced, they tend to be more aware of the types of stressors they are likely to undergo. As they experience such stressors, experienced psychologists are likely to be more aware of and to use personally effective coping strategies.

Huebner (1992) determined that burnout in the forms of feelings of emotional exhaustion and lack of perceived efficacy may be an unrecognized concern among school psychologists. In addition, a significant relationship was found between job-related stressors and burnout. The lack of resources such as inflexible supervisors, unavailability of testing materials, inadequate secretarial help, and lack of colleague contact were the most notable contributors to emotional exhaustion and burnout. Other contributors described were referral backlogs, report writing, suicide and child abuse cases, threats of due process, lack of consensus in staffings, and unyielding teachers and/or parents.

Huebner (1992) concluded that personal caseloads of school psychologists were not directly related to burnout. However, psychologists perceptions of their caseloads did significantly relate to burnout. This finding was consistent with that of Raquepaw and Miller (1989). They ascertained that although the caseload itself did not impel burnout, the satisfaction with personal caseloads did have a significant influence. Psychologists' perceptions of having too

many clients were notably associated with feelings of burnout. If the psychologist perceived himself as overburdened, symptoms of burnout were probable.

Ahrens (1977) found that job satisfaction correlated positively with income, community size, experience in present position, professional experience, and education. An examination of the hierarchy of sub-factors contributing to overall job satisfaction indicates that school psychologists are satisfied with most aspects of their jobs. A positive relationship was found between age and job satisfaction suggesting that school psychologists eventually succeed in effecting the development of job satisfaction through changes in personal aspirations and needs, or in the job itself, or they leave the profession. Ahrens (1977) additionally reported that job satisfaction was not related to caseload. A negative relationship, however, was found between psychologist-to-student ratio and overall job satisfaction. Thus, it is assumed that as the psychologist-to-student ratios increase, the actual workload increases because more clients must be served. When ratios are too high, school psychologists become overworked and job dissatisfaction and burnout results.

In a study by Wright and Gutkin (1981), areas relating to interpersonal relationships between school psychologists and other school personnel, (i.e., effective communication among those with whom one has frequent contact, and relationships with immediate superiors), were rated higher than the subject's overall level of job

satisfaction. Thus, psychologists reported being more frequently satisfied in reference to their interpersonal relationships with other school personnel. The psychologist's workload and the ability to effect change or results was rated significantly below the subject's overall level of job satisfaction as psychologists reported being less frequently satisfied. Wright and Gutkin (1981) concluded that as a group, the majority of school psychologists find their workload excessive.

In a study of rural Pennsylvania school psychologists, Jerrell (1984), supported the idea that diversity of role lends itself to higher levels of job satisfaction. School psychologists engaging in more boundary-spanning functions such as community liaison work, reported being more satisfied with their jobs than those not involved in such functions. Those school psychologists who were more involved in community liaison activities described themselves as "networking types," and were more aware of the need to collaborate with other professionals, more influential in determining their role and overall more satisfied with their jobs.

Ahrens (1977) conducted a study on the effects of internal role conflict on overall job satisfaction of school psychologists. He reported that school psychologists are programmed to fulfill roles as change agents through their training and literature. Few employment settings, however, exist which support all of the role functions portrayed in the literature. The substantial discrepancy between real

and desired roles was found to be a source of much frustration and served to create a sense of professional impotence. Such a discrepancy between training and actual service roles was found to lead to incongruence, job dissatisfaction, burnout, and the tendency to terminate.

Benson and Hughes (1985) reported that school psychologists typically spend about 50% of their time in assessment activities, 20% in consultation, and their remaining time divided among counseling, in-servicing, administration, counseling parents, research, and program evaluation. However, school psychologists report a desire to spend less time in assessment and more time in every other activity, especially in consultation with school personnel and preventive interventions (Hughes, 1979). School psychologists experiencing a discrepancy between actual and desired roles often encounter job-related tension and lower levels of job satisfaction. Such an inconsistency between actual and ideal perceptions may be a source of conflict and anxiety for school psychologists, further resulting in burnout.

According to Anderson, Hohenshil and Brown (1988), training programs in school psychology prior to the passage of PL 94-142 (The Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975) encouraged students to move beyond intelligence testing and into broader service roles such as, consultation, parent training, and systematic intervention. However, PL 94-142 propelled many school

psychologists to spend much of their time conducting initial psychoeducational evaluations and the required re-evaluations of exceptional students. Guidubaldi (1981) indicated that school psychologists report wanting to diversify their roles, but that federal and state regulations necessitating an emphasis on psychoeducational assessment of handicapped students have prevented school psychologists from functioning in roles other than "tester." Thus, the broad course requirements in training programs have produced an era of highly qualified school psychologists to provide a larger array of services than many school systems request (Guidubaldi, 1981). Consequently, few school psychologists find employment in settings which support all of the role functions for which they are trained. Hence, a large number of practicing school psychologists find their skills under-utilized, a situation that leads to incongruence, job dissatisfaction, and burnout (Guidubaldi, 1981).

It is evident that burnout and job dissatisfaction are threatening problems among today's school psychologists. In the past, many studies (e.g. Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Wise, 1985; Miller, Witt, & Finley, 1981; Trachtman, 1981) have focused primarily on job satisfaction among school psychologists. Such studies examined self-esteem, personal adjustment, and general life adjustment. A review of the literature, however, has generated only a few published studies that closely address burnout (Huebner, 1992; Huberty & Huebner, 1988; Pierson-Hubeny & Archambault, 1987; Reiner &

Hartshorne, 1982). Furthermore, the generalizability of results from such studies to conditions in Illinois is questionable due to Illinois' current state of education, lack of available funding, shortage of personal, etc. In addition, the burnout scales that were employed lack solid reliability and validity. Thus, the purpose of this study is to identify variables related to burnout among school psychologists in Illinois. In this study, burnout is described as emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and the desire to leave the job and/or profession. The primary questions addressed include: (a) What is the extent of burnout among a statewide sample of school psychologists? (b) What principal job-related stressors are associated with burnout? (c) What relationship exists between certain demographic variables and burnout? and (d) What best predicts burnout?

Chapter II
Method

Survey materials were mailed to a random sample of 250 members of the Illinois School Psychologists Association (ISPA). Subjects were asked to complete the survey materials only if they were currently working as practitioners in school settings. A total of 139 surveys were returned, of which 117 were usable.

Each participant received a cover letter, a postpaid return envelope, a Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI: Maslach & Jackson, 1986), a School Psychologists Stress Inventory (SPSI: Wise, 1985), and a demographic and job satisfaction questionnaire designed for this study.

The MBI is a self-report device consisting of three subscales (Emotional Exhaustion [EE], Depersonalization [DP], and Personal Accomplishment [PA]). According to Maslach and Jackson (1986), burnout is conceptualized as a continuous variable, ranging from low to moderate to high degrees of experienced feeling. A high degree of burnout is reflected in high scores on the EE and DP subscales and in low scores on the PA subscale. An average degree of burnout is reflected in average scores on the three subscales and a low degree of burnout is reflected in low scores on the EE and DP subscales and in high scores on the PA subscale. Based on Maslach and Jackson's (1986) findings, scores are considered high if they are in the upper third of the normative distribution, average if they are in the middle

third, and low if they are in the lower third. On the EE subscale, raw scores from 0 to 16 are considered low, from 17 to 26 are considered moderate, and from 27 and above are considered high. On the DP subscale, raw scores from 0 to 6 are considered low, from 7 to 12 are considered moderate, and from 13 and above are considered high. On the PA subscale, raw scores from 39 and above are considered low, from 32 to 38 are considered moderate, and from 0 to 31 are considered high. Such cut-off points were derived from the normative sample used in Maslach and Jackson's study (1986). Reported reliability coefficients for the subscales include: .90 for Emotional Exhaustion; .79 for Depersonalization; and .71 for Personal Accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Each scale is rated for frequency of occurrence from 0 (never) to 6 (everyday).

The SPSI was used to determine specific stressors affecting school psychologists. This scale, developed by Wise (1985), is a self-report device consisting of 36 stressful events related to areas such as interpersonal conflict, risks to self and others, time management, and legal issues. The SPSI is based on a nine-point Likert scale with 1 being the least stressful and 9 being the most stressful. According to Wise (1985), the SPSI can be broken down into nine factors through factor analysis. These factors encompass interpersonal conflict, high risk to self and others, obstacles to efficient job performance, public speaking, time management, travel hassles, professional enrichment, insufficient recognition of work, and legal issues. No reliability

and/or validity coefficients are reported for the SPSI in existing research.

The demographic and satisfaction questionnaire included demographic items related to age, salary, size of district, and years of experience. Items related to job satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, intent to leave the profession, and caseloads were also included. Subjects were asked to indicate on a 6-point Likert scale their degree of job satisfaction; their desire to leave their current job; their desire to leave the profession; and their satisfaction with supervision. In addition, subjects were asked to report the number of case studies they completed the previous semester as well as their preferred number of case studies. A Case Discrepancy Index was calculated by finding the difference between these two figures.

The statistical procedures used to answer the research questions were as follows:

1) Means and standard deviations were obtained for each of the measures of the extent of burnout. This was operationalized as the MBI subscales: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment.

2) Means and standard deviations were obtained for each of the job related stressors. This was operationalized as the SPSI factors: Interpersonal Conflict, High Risk to Self and Others, Lack of Resources, Public Speaking, Time Management, and Travel Hassles.

3) Means and standard deviations were obtained for each of the demographic variables: Subject's Age, Number of Years Served as a Practicing School Psychologist, Number of Schools Currently Served, Number of Districts Currently Served, Number of Students Currently Served, Number of School Psychologists Currently Employed by the District, Number of Cases Completed within the Past Semester, and Number of Cases Preferred to be Completed within the Past Semester.

4) Pearson product-moment correlations were used to determine the degree of relationships among the demographic variables and burnout indicators: Number of Years as a Practicing School Psychologist, Case Discrepancy Index (number of cases preferred subtracted from the number of actual cases completed), Supervision Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction, Desire to Leave Current Job, Desire to Leave Profession, and MBI subscale scores for EE, DP, and PA.

5) Multiple regression analyses were used to predict the extent of job satisfaction, the desire to leave a current job, and the desire to leave the profession as measured by the demographic and satisfaction scale constructed for this study. Multiple regression analyses were further used to predict the MBI subscales including EE, DP, and PA.

Chapter III
Results

The subjects reported a mean age of 42.18 (SD=10.04) with 11.42 (SD=7.64) years as practicing school psychologists. Sixty-nine percent were female and 29% were male. Twenty-four percent indicated the master's degree, 49% indicated the master's degree plus thirty or more additional hours, 15% indicated the Specialist's degree, and 11% indicated the doctoral degree as their highest degree attained. Twenty percent of the subjects reported their job location to be urban, 49% suburban, 29% rural, and <1% to be within prison communities. The sample appeared representative as the demographic characteristics correspond favorably to data collected from national samples of school psychologists by Huebner (1992) and Stinnett, Havey, and Oehler-Stinnett (in press).

The subjects reported an approximate number of hours they spent per week in various activities. The mean number of hours spent in assessment and report writing was 19.06 (SD=11.77), indirect intervention and consultation was 8.20 (SD=6.59), direct intervention and treatment was 7.14 (SD=8.40), continuing education was 1.43 (SD=2.34), and research was .39 (SD=1.37). The mean number of hours reported to be spent in unspecified activities was 3.06 (SD=5.34). These hours were quite similar to those collected by Stinnett, Havey, and Oehler-Stinnett (in press) in a national sample of school psychologists.

Means for each SPSI factor, excluding three one-item factors, were 4.55 (SD=1.75) for Interpersonal Conflict, 3.26 (SD=1.53) for High Risk to Self and Others, 4.32 (SD=1.62) for Lack of Resources, 2.62 (SD=1.78) for Public Speaking, 5.39 (SD=2.05) for Time Management, and 2.99 (SD=2.06) for Travel Hassles. Factor scores were made comparable by summing the scores for each item and dividing by the total number of items for the particular factor. Huebner (1992) used this method in his national investigation.

The mean MBI scale scores were 21.20 (SD=10.23) on Emotional Exhaustion, 5.60 (SD=4.63) on Depersonalization, and 38.09 (SD=6.24) on Personal Accomplishment. These scores are very similar to those MBI scores reported by Huebner (1992) and by Huberty and Huebner (1988) in national surveys of school psychologists. Using Maslach and Jackson's criterion for "high" scores (i.e., scores in the upper third of the normative distribution on the EE and DP scales; scores in the lower third of the distribution for the PA scale), 28.8 percent of the subjects in this study showed high Emotional Exhaustion, 11.0% showed high Depersonalization, and 50.8% showed low Personal Accomplishment.

The subjects were asked to rate on a six-point Likert scale (1 [very high] to 6 [very low]) their overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervision, desire to leave their current job, and their desire to leave the profession. Mean ratings were 2.47 (SD=1.20) for job satisfaction, 3.25 (SD=1.70) for satisfaction with supervision, 4.49

(SD=1.55) for desire to leave current job, and 4.98 (SD=1.25) for desire to leave the profession.

Table 1 presents correlations among the various demographic variables and MBI subscale scores. Results were what was expected. Overall job satisfaction was significantly related to satisfaction with supervision (r=.547), desire to leave current job(r= -.792), and desire to leave the profession (r= -.550). Satisfaction with supervision was significantly related to the number of years as a school psychologist (r=.173), desire to leave current job (r= -.417), and desire to leave the profession (r= -.244). Furthermore, desire to leave current job was predictably related to desire to leave the profession (r=.536).

Several significant correlations were found among the MBI subscales and various demographic variables, further supporting the construct validity of the MBI with school psychologists. Emotional Exhaustion was significantly correlated ($p<.001$) with satisfaction with supervision (r=.303), overall job satisfaction (r=.579), desire to leave current job (r= -.499), and desire to leave the profession (r= -.421). Depersonalization was significantly correlated ($p<.001$) with satisfaction with supervision (r=.353) and overall job satisfaction (r=.319). Personal Accomplishment was significantly correlated ($p<.001$) with satisfaction with supervision (r= -.359), overall job satisfaction (r= -.452), and desire to leave the profession (r=.352).

Subjects were further asked to estimate their actual caseloads (including evaluation and intervention cases completed during the

previous semester) as well as their ideal caseloads (i.e., number of clients they would like to have served during the previous semester). A discrepancy index was calculated by subtracting ideal from actual caseloads. Although their actual caseloads did not predict burnout, their discrepancy scores did. The correlations between the discrepancy index and MBI were .299 with Emotional Exhaustion, .301 with Depersonalization, and -.110 with Personal Accomplishment. The significant Depersonalization correlation ($p<.001$) suggested that negative attitudes toward clients increased as dissatisfaction with caseloads increased.

Table 1

Correlations Among Demographic Variables and MBI Scores

	YRSPSY	CASEDIS	SPVSAT	JOBSAT	LVJOB	LVPROF	EE	DP	PA
YRSPSY	1.00	.05	.17*	.13	-.17*	-.23*	.05	.06	.09
CASEDIS		1.00	.22*	.38**	-.40**	-.02	.30**	.30**	-.11
SPVSAT			1.00	.55**	-.42**	-.24*	.30**	.35**	-.36**
JOBSAT				1.00	-.79**	-.55**	.58**	.32**	-.45**
LVJOB					1.00	.54**	-.50**	-.27*	.25*
LVPROF						1.00	-.42**	-.14	.35**
EE							1.00	.43**	-.34**
DP								1.00	-.29**
PA									1.00

Note.
YRSPSY = Number of years as a school psychologist
CASEDIS = Case discrepancy index
SPVSAT = Satisfaction with supervision
JOBSAT = Satisfaction with current job
LVJOB = Desire to leave current job
LVPROF = Desire to leave profession
EE = Emotional exhaustion DP = Depersonalization PA = Personal Accomplishment
*p < .05
**p < .001

Several stepwise multiple regression analyses were employed to identify the best predictors of overall job satisfaction, desire to leave current job, desire to leave the profession, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. Table 2 summarizes the regressions.

Satisfaction with supervision was the best predictor of overall job satisfaction and accounted for 30% of the variance. Satisfaction with supervision was also able to predict desire to leave current job (17% of variance), desire to leave the profession (6% of variance), Emotional Exhaustion (9% of variance) and Depersonalization (13% of variance). The case discrepancy index was the second best predictor of overall job satisfaction and accounted for 7% of additional variance. The case discrepancy index also added to the prediction of desire to leave current job (11%), Emotional Exhaustion (6%), and Depersonalization (5%). Finally, overall job satisfaction was the best predictor of personal accomplishment accounting for 20% of the variance. No other variables added significantly to the predictions.

Table 2

Regressions Predicting Job Satisfaction, Desire to Leave Job and Profession, and MBI Factors

	R	R^2	R^2 change	F to-enter	P	Overall F*
Job Satisfaction						
SPVSAT	0.55	0.30		6.60	0.00	43.55
CASEDIS	0.61	0.37	0.07	3.39	0.01	29.77
Desire to Leave Job						
SPVSAT	0.42	0.17		-4.63	0.00	21.44
CASEDIS	0.53	0.28	0.11	-3.78	0.00	19.27
Desire to Leave Profession						
SPVSAT	0.24	0.06		-2.54	0.01	6.44
Emotional Exhaustion						
SPVSAT	0.30	0.09		3.20	0.00	10.29
CASEDIS	0.39	0.15	0.06	2.60	0.01	8.81
Depersonalization						
SPVSAT	0.35	0.13		3.81	0.00	14.51
CASEDIS	0.42	0.18	0.05	2.54	0.01	10.88
Personal Accomplishment						
JOBSAT	0.45	0.20		-5.11	0.00	26.13

SPVSAT = Satisfaction with supervision
CASEDIS = Case discrepancy index
JOBSAT = Satisfaction with current job

Chapter IV
Discussion

The first goal of this investigation was to estimate the extent of burnout among practicing school psychologists in Illinois. Using Maslach and Jackson's (1986) definition, this research suggested that burnout in the forms of feelings of emotional exhaustion and lack of perceived efficacy is a great, but often unrecognized, concern among this group of professionals. More than one-quarter of the respondents met the criterion for high Emotional Exhaustion, more than one-half met the criterion for reduced Personal Accomplishment, and more than one-tenth met the criterion for high Depersonalization.

A second goal of this research was to determine the job-related stressors that are associated with burnout using Wise's (1985) SPSI factors. Time management (e.g., backlog of referrals, backlog of reports) ranked as the highest stressor followed by interpersonal conflict (e.g., teacher dissatisfaction with recommendations, conferences with resistant teachers and parents, lack of consensus in staffings), lack of resources (e.g., lack of appropriate assessment materials, inadequate secretarial help), high risk to self and others (e.g., potential suicide cases, child abuse cases, threats of due process hearings), travel hassles (e.g., carrying testing equipment, excessive driving time), and public speaking (e.g., conducting in-services, parent groups).

The relationship between various demographic variables and burnout was also investigated as the third goal of this research. Satisfaction with supervision, overall job satisfaction, desire to leave the job, and desire to leave the profession contributed significantly to Maslach and Jackson's (1986) definition of burnout. Although school psychologists' actual caseloads were not related to burnout, their perceptions of their caseloads did significantly relate to burnout. A case discrepancy index was calculated by subtracting subjects' perceptions of ideal caseloads from their actual caseloads. Consistent with findings by Huebner (1992) and Huberty and Huebner (1988), this case discrepancy score was significantly correlated to the MBI subscales. This finding suggests that further research of individual differences in psychologists' appraisals of their working conditions is important in investigating job satisfaction and burnout.

Determining the best predictors of burnout was the final goal of this research. Demographic variables including satisfaction with supervision and the case discrepancy index were found to be the strongest predictors of burnout. Such results suggest that supervisors are considered to be central figures in resistance to burnout as they could provide technical assistance, feedback, and support. Williams, Williams, and Ryer (1990) speculate that the types of feedback available to school psychologists and the quality of that

feedback may be associated with differences in job satisfaction and self-perceptions of competence.

In closing, much remains to be learned about burnout among school psychologists in Illinois. Even though satisfaction with supervision appears to be a key variable, it is unclear from this study whether school psychologists in Illinois feel that they receive insufficient amounts of supervision or that the supervision they receive is of inferior quality. Although many variables were examined in this research, a great amount of variance remains unaccounted for in predicting burnout. Thus, it is hoped that this study will stimulate further research in the study of job satisfaction and burnout, as well as promote greater attention to preventing burnout in the field of school psychology.

Footnote

Permission to reproduce the School Psychologists Stress Inventory for use in this study was granted by Paula S. Wise, a professor in the Department of Psychology at Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois.

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